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ABSTRACT

Evaluation of a county system of intensive language instruction in special language centers, including subject-area instruction in social studies, science, and mathematics, for limited-English-speaking high school students found improvement in program consistency, retention, enrollment, and completion. The program was found to be helpful to students both in further schooling and in the work world, with the majority of graduates continuing education and planning careers in popular professional fields. About one-fourth of the graduates felt underprepared to handle regular English language subject-area classes or to write English on the job, with recent graduates more positive about their preparation than earlier graduates. Students currently served by the intensive language centers were likely to spend most of their time as English-as-a-second-language or bilingual program students, since the number of courses offered for credit toward graduation has been substantially increased. Further examination of the comparability of intensive language program and mainstream program results and monitoring of the progress of mainstreamed program participants are recommended. (MSE)

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

Evaluation of the ESOL/Bilingual Program: Phase III

A Further Analysis of the High School Program of Services

April 1986

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

EVALUATION OF THE ESOL/BILINGUAL PROGRAM: PHASE III
A FURTHER ANALYSIS OF THE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM OF SERVICES

by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EVALUATION OF THE ESOL/BILINGUAL PROGRAM: PHASE III
A FURTHER ANALYSIS OF THE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM OF SERVICES

PURPOSE

MCPS provides English language and other educational services to over 4,000 limited-English-proficient students each year. Many of these students have had little or interrupted prior schooling in their native countries. They usually require instruction in the basic skills as well as in English before they can succeed in regular MCPS classes.

The primary service provided by the ESOL/Bilingual Program is English language instruction (ESOL English). At the high school level, however, students enrolled in four Intensive English Language Centers[1] receive special instruction in social studies, science, and mathematics in addition to ESOL English. They also have access to audiovisual laboratory equipment to help them develop their listening and speaking skills. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the program of services provided to ESOL/Bilingual students in the high school Intensive English Language Centers.

FINDINGS

Results of this study show that the program currently provided in the Intensive English Language Centers is superior to the one provided to ESOL/Bilingual students in earlier years. The data indicate that a specific program of services, consisting primarily of ESOL English instruction and ESOL classes in science, social studies, and mathematics can now be identified. In prior years, no recognizable program could be found that was provided in all four centers.

Students currently served by the program tend to stay in it longer than did students in the past, and they also take more ESOL courses each semester than did their predecessors. Additionally, students currently served by the program are more likely to complete the entire program prior to leaving it than were students in the past. Since data from both the earlier and current study demonstrated that completion of the program was related to success in the MCPS mainstream, these findings also suggest a positive impact of the Intensive English Language Centers.

Graduates of the ESOL/Bilingual Program reported that the programn was helpful to them in both further schooling and in the work world. The majority of the graduates were continuing their education and had planned careers in popular professional areas such as engineering or computer science.[2]

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1. During this study, the four centers were Northwood, Richard Montgomery, Blair, and Bethesda-Chevy Chase.

2. Three-fourths of the ESOL graduates attended Montgomery College. Countywide, 29 percent of the MCPS graduates attend junior colleges.

About one-fourth of the graduates felt that they had not been sufficiently prepared to deal with the work required in regular English classes or to handle the amount of written English needed for a job. Recent graduates were more positive about their preparation than were earlier graduates. While this finding suggests that the Intensive English Language Centers are better preparing students to function in English speaking school and work, conclusive statements cannot be made at this time since only limited follow-up data are available for students who were served exclusively in the centers as they currently exist.

Finally, the data show that students currently served by the Intensive English Language Centers are likely to spend the majority of their time as ESOL/Bilingual students. Additionally, they will probably take fewer of their high school courses outside the ESOL/Bilingual curriculum than did students in the past, since more graduation requirements are now offered within the program. While it is assumed that students who are still receiving English instruction within the ESOL/Bilingual curriculum would benefit from courses specifically designed for them, the comparability of social studies, science, or mathematics courses offered within the ESOL/ Bilingual Program to regular (non-ESOL) MCPS courses of the same name has not been evaluated. For this reason, the further progress of students who graduate directly from the ESOL/Bilingual Program or spend minimal time in the MCPS mainstream should be monitored.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation findings indicate that the current program of services provided in the Intensive English Language Centers is superior to the former program which relied almost exclusively on ESOL English instruction. However, due to the relative newness of the current program, there has not been sufficient time to develop a conclusive track record of program successes. Therefore, it is recommended that the ESOL/Bilingual Program staff continue to monitor the progress of program graduates and students who are mainstreamed into the regular MCPS high school program. Three specific activities are suggested:

- Continued monitoring of the performance in reading and writing skills of students who are mainstreamed in regular English and social studies classes to assess whether the current program fully prepares these students to function in the MCPS mainstream or if additional skills development is needed within the ESOL/Bilingual Program.

- Monitoring of graduates who were fully mainstreamed in the regular MCPS program prior to graduation to assess their preparation for further schooling and/or work.

- Monitoring of students who graduated directly from the ESOL/ Bilingual Program to determine whether additional services, over and above those provided in the Intensive English Language Centers, are needed by students who do not complete the ESOL/ Bilingual curriculum prior to graduation.

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EVALUATION OF THE ESOL/BILINGUAL PROGRAM: PHASE III
A FURTHER ANALYSIS OF THE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM OF SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

DESCRIPTION OF THE ESOL STUDENTS

MCPS provides English language and other educational services to over 4,000 limited-English-proficient students each year. Students served by the MCPS ESOL/Bilingual Program represent a diversity of educational, cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Many students are from embassy and world organization families; however, the majority have come to the United States as immigrants or refugees. Some students have excellent academic backgrounds and require only English language instruction to perform well in the regular MCPS instructional program. Others, however, have had little or interrupted prior schooling in their native countries. These students require instruction in English and the basic skills before they can succeed in regular MCPS classes.

THE ESOL/BILINGUAL HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM OF SERVICES

The primary service provided by the ESOL/Bilingual Program is English language instruction (ESOL English). At the high school level, however, students enrolled in the Intensive English Language Centers (Northwood,[1] Montgomery Blair, Richard Montgomery, and Bethesda-Chevy Chase) receive a variety of services in addition to ESOL English. Exhibit 1 illustrates these services. The intent of the ESOL/Bilingual Program is to provide students with the English skills necessary for further education and/or work.

FORMER EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM

In 1982-83, the Department of Educational Accountability (DEA) examined the high school ESOL/Bilingual Program.[2] This evaluation, referred to here as the "original study", had two major objectives:

- To describe the general program of services provided to ESOL/Bilingual high school students
- To assess the impact of the ESOL/Bilingual Program on high school students' proficiency in English

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1. Northwood's students are now served primarily at Einstein and Blair.

2. S. Gross and J. Stevenson, Evaluation of the ESOL/Bilingual Program: Phase II - An Analysis of the High School Program of Services, Department of Educational Accountability, Montgomery County (Md.) Public Schools, February 1985.

EXHIBIT 1

ESOL Services Provided in the Intensive English Language Centers
in Addition to ESOL English

Description of Services	Subject	Language	Teacher Requirements
Transitional Bilingual Classes			
Classes taught in the native language of the students at the beginning of the year, with addition of more English as the year goes on and student proficiency increases. Classes may be offered only where there is a group of students of the same native language who are in need of the course.	Mostly social studies, limited math and science	Mostly Spanish, limited Vietnamese	Subject area certification and fluency in students' native language
Alternative ESOL Classes			
Classes conducted in English for ESOL/ Bilingual students. Student enrollment limited to ESOL/Bilingual students. Classes may be taught by ESOL or content area teacher.	Social studies, science, math. Some classes in Developmental Reading are available.	English	Subject area certification
Language Laboratories			
Classes in which students may use audiovisual equipment to increase their listening and speaking skills.	English	English	May be conducted by a teacher assistant

The original study examined the ESOL/Bilingual Program provided to 358 students in the four Intensive English Language Centers and two noncenter schools. It attempted to link services provided to the students to outcomes, such as English proficiency, course grades, and students' ability to function in the MCPS mainstream.

The evaluation results showed that the ESOL/Bilingual Program was meeting the needs of most of the high school students it served. The students spent the majority of their entire high school careers in the ESOL/Bilingual Program. They passed the Maryland Functional Reading Test (MFRT) in time for graduation and graduated from high school in the appropriate length of time. Nevertheless, questions were raised in a few critical areas.

Many students had left the ESOL/Bilingual Program prematurely without completing all of the levels of English instruction included in the program. While study findings showed that students who completed the program[3] performed significantly better than students who did not complete the program, noncompleters had performed moderately well in the regular MCPS high school program. On the other hand, many students graduated from MCPS directly from the ESOL/Bilingual Program. Data indicate that they were working at various levels of English proficiency. This finding raised concerns about how well prepared these students might be to function in an English-speaking work world.

Findings from the original study indicated that many of the students had participated in the ESOL/Bilingual Program prior to full implementation of the current entry/exit assessment and monitoring process. For these students, information concerning progress through the ESOL/Bilingual Program was incomplete, at best. Thus, for many students, it was impossible to determine whether they had, in fact, completed the program (but exit test data were missing) or whether they were true program noncompleters. Therefore, no definitive conclusions could be drawn linking performance on the assessment battery or progress through the levels of ESOL/Bilingual English instruction to future success in the MCPS mainstream.

For these reasons, the original study concluded that to evaluate the program as it currently existed based on the findings for these students would not do it justice. Therefore, DEA conducted a follow-up study of the ESOL/Bilingual High School Program during the 1983-84 school year. This report presents the results of the follow-up study. It focuses on the issues raised in the original study and presents the results of the evaluation of services provided to ESOL/Bilingual students in the Intensive English Language Centers.

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3. Criteria for completion of the program consist of the following: completion of all five levels of the ESOL/Bilingual English instructional program and attainment of a passing score indicating advanced level of English skills on a test of English competency.

THE CURRENT STUDY

The current study has two major objectives:

- To describe the general program of services provided to ESOL/Bilingual high school students in the Intensive English Language Centers
- To assess the impact of the ESOL/Bilingual Program on high school students

THE SAMPLES

The current study made use of data from three groups of students:

- One hundred and nineteen new students were included in the current study. These students enrolled in MCPS no earlier than the fall of 1982 and received their ESOL/Bilingual services in one of the Intensive English Language Centers. They were added to the study to examine the pure effect of the Intensive English Language Centers and are referred to in this report as the 1983-84 sample.
- Two hundred and one students from the original sample remained in school for at least one semester past the original data collection period. The current study examined their performance data for the 1983-84 school year. These data were used to compare the later educational experiences of these students to their earlier years, when the Intensive English Language Centers were in transition.
- Interviews were conducted with 135 students who had graduated from MCPS. Data were gathered regarding employment and/or educational experiences of the graduates after they left MCPS. They were also asked to provide their assessments of how well MCPS had prepared them for work and further schooling. These graduates represented both samples: the original sample and the 1983-84 sample.

STUDY FINDINGS

Results from the current study are organized in three sections in this report. First, findings from the 1983-84 sample are discussed. Comparisons between findings from the original and the current study illustrate the changes that have occurred in the program over time. And, to the extent that they are observed, these changes are linked to changes in student performance. Second, this summary presents the further progress of the students in the original sample who were followed for an additional year. Finally, the summary provides the results of interviews with ESOL/Bilingual graduates.

COMPARISON OF THE 1983-84 SAMPLE AND THE ORIGINAL SAMPLE

Results from comparison of the 1983-84 sample with the original sample indicate that the ESOL/Bilingual Program provided in the Intensive English Language Centers has attained some stability. Students in the 1983-84 sample had more consistent programs of studies as measured by the number and

variety of the courses they took. On the average, they remained in the ESOL/Bilingual Program longer than did students in the original sample, and they took fewer non-ESOL courses. Students in the 1983-84 study also took fewer basic skills or remedial courses than did students in the original sample. This may be a result of the variety of services currently available to students in the Intensive English Language Centers.

Additionally, students in the 1983-84 sample were more likely to complete the ESOL/Bilingual Program prior to leaving it. They received better ratings from non-ESOL teachers on their English language skills and classroom performance than did students in the original study. Moreover, the 1983-84 students who passed the Maryland Functional Reading Test were working at significantly lower levels of English proficiency in the ESOL/Bilingual Program than were students from the original sample.[4] All of these findings would suggest that the more intensive program currently provided to the students at the Intensive English Language Centers is beneficial.

THE ORIGINAL SAMPLE OF ESOL/BILINGUAL STUDENTS: AN ADDITIONAL YEAR'S DATA

An additional year's data collected for 201 students in the original sample show that not much changed over time for these students. They continued to progress in school at about the same rate as they had in the past, and a large percentage graduated from high school. During the 1983-84 school year, additional students from the original sample passed the MFRT and/or completed the ESOL/Bilingual Program. Nevertheless, their progress does not match the performance of the 1983-84 sample in these areas. These findings reflect positively on the program of services currently provided in the Intensive English Language Centers.

INTERVIEWS WITH ESOL GRADUATES

One hundred and thirty-five ESOL/Bilingual high school graduates (53 percent of the graduates) were located and interviewed for this study.[5] Interview results show that three-fourths of the ESOL/Bilingual graduates continued their education after leaving MCPS. Seventy-four percent of them were attending Montgomery College, and another 15 percent have gone from Montgomery College to the University of Maryland.[6] While in school, most of

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4. In both samples, close to 75 percent of the ESOL/Bilingual students had passed the MFRT at the time data collection ended. However, slightly more than one-third of the students in the 1983-84 sample were working at the two beginning ESOL English levels when they passed the MFRT. Less than 3 percent of the original sample were working at these levels when they passed the test.

5. Interviewers did not keep a systematic record of why graduates could not be contacted. However, notations indicated that a large percentage had moved or that the telephone number given to the interviewer was no longer correct.

6. Countywide, 29 percent of the MCPS high school graduates attend junior colleges. Fifty-three percent of the Hispanic graduates, overall, and 26 percent of the Asian graduates, overall, attend junior colleges.

the graduates have also been working part or full time. They have been employed primarily in clerical or low-skill positions.

Overall, the graduates were positive about the education provided to them by MCPS and felt fairly well prepared in skills needed for further schooling and/or work. Hispanic students were significantly more positive than Asian students about their preparation for work. They also felt significantly better prepared to attend classes conducted in English and to speak in English.[7] Recent graduates were somewhat more positive than students who had graduated earlier; however, these results were not statistically significant. Nonetheless, it is considered a promising finding, especially since these graduates did not experience the full impact of the program currently provided by the Intensive English Language Centers.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results of the additional analysis of the ESOL/Bilingual High School Program indicate that the program currently provided in the Intensive English Language Centers is superior to that provided to students in earlier years. The data indicate that a specific program of services, consisting primarily of ESOL English instruction and classes in science, social studies, and mathematics provided expressly for ESOL/Bilingual students, can now be identified. In prior years, no identifiable program could be found that was provided in all four centers.

This study also shows that students currently served by the program are more likely to complete the entire program than were students in the past. Since data from the original study demonstrated that completion of the program was related to success in the MCPS mainstream, these findings suggest a positive impact of the Intensive English Language Centers.

Graduates of the ESOL/Bilingual Program reported that it was helpful to them in both further schooling and in the work world. Analyses of the results for students who graduated in specific academic years from 1980-81 to 1983-84 indicate that the recent graduates perceived their program to be more helpful than did earlier graduates. These findings also support the benefit of the program of services currently provided in the Intensive English Language Centers.

Particular comments from some of the graduates indicate, however, that about one-fourth of them did not feel sufficiently prepared for what was required of them in regular English classes. They also indicated that they needed more preparation in writing to function effectively at work. Since these graduates received their ESOL/Bilingual services while the current program was in transition, their comments should not be construed as indicating a weakness in the current program. They are indicative, nonetheless, of a need for continued monitoring of graduates from the program.

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7. This finding should be interpreted with caution since there were three times as many Asian students as there were Hispanic students (97 vs. 33) in the sample of graduates.

Additionally, the data indicate that students currently served by the program, who have arrived in the United States at high school age, are likely to spend the majority of their high school time as ESOL/Bilingual students. In addition, they will probably take fewer of their courses as non-ESOL courses, since more of the graduation requirements are now provided within the ESOL/Bilingual curriculum. This is a substantial departure from the past, when a large proportion of their high school time would have been spent in regular MCPS mainstream classes. For this reason as well, it is suggested that the ESOL/Bilingual Program staff continue to monitor the progress of its students to ensure that the current program is meeting all of their needs.

Therefore, the following monitoring activities are suggested as a result of this report:

- Continued monitoring of the performance in reading and writing skills of students mainstreamed in regular English and social studies classes. Results of this monitoring will indicate whether the current program has fully prepared students to function in the MCPS mainstream or if additional skills development is needed within the ESOL/Bilingual Program.

- Monitoring of graduates who were fully mainstreamed in the regular MCPS curriculum prior to graduation. This effort will assess the preparation of current program graduates for further schooling and/or work.

- Monitoring of students who graduated directly from the ESOL/Bilingual Program. Results of this monitoring would determine whether additional services, over and above those provided in the Intensive English Language Centers, are needed by students who do not complete the ESOL/Bilingual curriculum prior to graduation.

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